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INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON INTERNAL SECURITY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20530

ICIS-P25/1516

APR 6 1972

Honorable Richard Helms
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Mr. Helms:

The Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security (ICIS) has revised and expanded its earlier report concerning the protection of certain government officials against assassination. In light of current domestic and world conditions, the ICIS has broadened the scope of its report to include defense against the possible assassination or kidnapping of such officials by domestic extremist groups.

A copy of the revised report, dated March 8, 1972, entitled "Defense Against the Assassination or Kidnapping of Certain Government Officials," is enclosed herewith for your information and for implementation by the Central Intelligence Agency. It is requested that the report be disseminated within your Agency in accordance with Recommendation 5 on page 7.

Your cooperation in this matter will be appreciated by this Committee.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Mardian

Robert C. Mardian
Chairman, Interdepartmental Committee
on Internal Security

Enclosure

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REPORT

BY

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON INTERNAL SECURITY

ON

DEFENSE AGAINST THE ASSASSINATION OR
KIDNAPPING OF CERTAIN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS (U)

March 8, 1972

GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification.
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A. PROBLEM

In order to minimize the threat of the possible kidnapping or assassination of certain government officials, the Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security (ICIS) recommends safeguards to be instituted by the officials and their departments and agencies. The ICIS last considered this problem in 1967, and issued a report, dated October 19, 1967. The ICIS has studied the matter again, and has revised and expanded the 1967 report in the light of current domestic and world conditions.

B. BACKGROUND

This study was made in accordance with the overall responsibility of ICIS, to ensure the maintenance of the highest practicable state of internal security. In the course of conducting the preliminary deliberations which preceded the adoption of the measures recommended herein, the ICIS obtained the views of the agencies primarily concerned.

The ICIS is of the opinion that the assassination or kidnapping of a number of those officials whose duty it is to make decisions and continue the essential functions of government, could constitute a definite threat to the national security.

Plans are now maintained in a high state of readiness in order to ensure the immediate evacuation of certain key government officials believed most important to the continued operation of the government during an imminent or actual attack against the United States

(attack-emergency). The ICIS has been advised that these plans provide for the evacuation and protection of the President, successors to the Presidency, and other key officials who would direct the operation of essential government functions.

The Secret Service is responsible for protecting the lives of the President and the Vice President and, therefore, this Committee's concern is directed mainly to the implementation of measures designed to minimize this threat as it relates to other key government officials.

The Office of Emergency Preparedness maintains plans for the evacuation of certain key officials of civil agencies considered essential to the effective performance of important functions during an attack-emergency. Each individual concerned has been briefed and is aware of the actions required of him in the event the plan is implemented. A communications system is maintained by OEP in order to effect appropriate instructions immediately in the event an attack is imminent. The OEP would notify each of the officials.

The recommendations of this report can be utilized to provide measures for the protection of all government officials, particularly those who might be the intended victims of assassination or kidnapping attempts by domestic, violence-oriented, extremist groups.

While protection equivalent to that provided the President would be too costly in manpower to be extended to all top-level officials of the Government, the ICIS believes that greater effort should be made to provide protection to those persons in the Government who would be highly attractive targets because they are entrusted with important decision-making responsibilities, or for

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other reasons, such as information they may possess.

C. DISCUSSION

In its previous studies of this matter, the ICIS was concerned, primarily, with the threat of assassination by an enemy power immediately prior to the outbreak of a general war. The ICIS studies demonstrated that the Soviets have the technical and operational capabilities for assassination operations. They have an organization specifically responsible for such operations, and they have employed assassination in the recent past.

They do not undertake such operations lightly, however. In the assassination of foreign political leaders, they are presumed to be inhibited by fear of a public reaction which could adversely affect their interest, despite the various measures they can and do take to reduce this reaction potential. This would be especially true in peacetime. Also, the Soviets would have to conclude that assassination would result in clear benefit to their cause, i.e., that the target's replacement would be a considerably less effective obstacle to Soviet designs. Although the possibility cannot be excluded, it is doubtful that the Soviets would assassinate or kidnap individual U.S. leaders solely for the purpose of terrorism. Assassination is deeply rooted in the Communist system and for that reason alone, most Communist countries have a capability to carry out such activities.

Since the issuance of the 1967 report on this matter, it has become apparent that domestic extremist groups constitute a potential threat against government officials. Recent events in Canada, and in some of the Central and South American countries, have demonstrated the willingness and ability of violent radicals to kidnap or assassinate

government officials. In the United States, there have been bombings and other violent activities by extremists against police stations, banks, government offices and other targets.

The ICIS has been informed that the kidnapping of prominent individuals for ransom has been discussed by members of the Black Panther Party. The object of such kidnapping would be to obtain the release from prison of persons of interest to the perpetrators. Members of extremist groups are known to have been trained in guerilla warfare techniques, and to have acquired the ability to manufacture and use explosive devices.

It is the intention of the ICIS to alert key government officials to the existence of the aforementioned threats, and to the necessity for taking reasonable safeguards.

Typical of the kind of measures that could be instituted without arousing undue excitement, and which will tend to raise our overall level of preparedness to meet these threats include:

1. As far as practicable, measures should be taken to avoid obvious fixed daily habits. Advance publicity about trips should be held to a minimum.

2. The official's residence and office should be made reasonably secure from unauthorized access.

3. Key government officials should be advised to exercise caution concerning all gifts received from unknown origin, and to consider having them inspected by trained security personnel.

4. The attendance of more than a small number of these key officials at public meeting places should be discouraged, and the number who use the same transport

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vehicle should be limited.

5. On the occasions when it is necessary to bring large numbers of these officials together, appropriate security measures should be implemented.

6. Each of the key officials to be protected should utilize such manpower and facilities from his own agency as is feasible for this purpose.

7. Emergency plans for providing protection for key officials should be capable of being placed into operation immediately.

8. The emergency plans should provide for maintaining liaison with local police departments or military commanders.

9. Each agency should have a plan for acquiring and training bodyguards, in case warning is received through a worsening of international relations or through a pattern of assassination attempts here and in other countries.

Plans for this type of protection need not be elaborate, but they should set forth the broad outline of the principles upon which such emergency protection would be executed in the event of a crisis. By this prior planning, valuable time can be saved if ever it becomes necessary to provide this type of protection. The Secret Service may be in a position to provide guidance along the above lines, when requested.

C. CONCLUSION

1. As a result of its study, this Committee concludes that there is less likelihood of wide-spread

assassination attempts on the lives of key government officials under normal peacetime circumstances. However, there is a distinct possibility of such attempts in the event of a war-related emergency. This is not meant to rule out the possibility of individual instances of assassination occurring under normal conditions, but is intended to point out that mass attempts are of a particular concern in periods of tension.

2. Assassination is deeply rooted in the Communist system and has been utilized in the past to effect Communist objectives.

3. It is prudent to bring this threat to the attention of all presidential successors and to those other officials, who, by reason of their position or knowledge, could be likely targets.

4. There is always danger of assassination in any gathering where a group of key government officials are concentrated.

5. Necessary provisions to ensure the safety of key government officials should be implemented whenever there is an indication of an impending attack upon them.

6. The threat of kidnapping or assassination by domestic extremist groups has been increasing. Government officials must be alert to this danger, which appears more likely under present circumstances than does a widespread attack by a foreign power.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommended steps are considered to be the minimum required as a reasonable precaution. It

is recognized that a number of agencies have already developed more detailed plans for meeting this threat.

1. Presidential successors, and the key officials in each government agency, should be made aware of the aforementioned threats, and of the need to take reasonable precautions in self-protection.

2. Contingency plans should be drawn in each government agency for protecting key officials when, and if, advance warning is received of a probable attack on them. The Secret Service may be in a position to provide guidance in developing such measures, if requested.

3. Plans and procedures should be developed and maintained by appropriate agencies, on a stand-by basis, to provide a means for rapid notification of specific key officials considered likely subjects of a possible assassination attack.

4. Group control measures should be instituted in order to minimize the concentration of key government officials into particularly inviting and vulnerable target groups.

5. This report should be disseminated to the head of each department and agency of the Executive Branch for controlled distribution to such officials as he determines to have a need to know.

6. Intelligence agencies should be particularly alert to this problem, and should promptly communicate any pertinent information to the agencies and officials concerned.

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